



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 12 January 2020

**To the Chair and Members of
CABINET**

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Chris McGuinness	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. An Environment and Sustainability strategy has been developed in response to the climate change and biodiversity emergency declaration made by Full Council in 2019. The strategy is derived from the latest research, data, opinion and insight gathered from residents, elected representatives, and a range of partner organisations, some via the Climate and Biodiversity Commission.
2. The strategy is presented alongside an evidence base, which together form part of a package of documents that include the climate and biodiversity commission report and numerous partner-specific strategies and plans.
3. The Strategy will be submitted for approval by Full Council on 21 January 2021.

EXEMPT REPORT

4. N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Approve the Environment and Sustainability strategy.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

6. The Strategy sets out how residents, elected representatives, public and private sector organisations and community groups need to respond to the climate change and biodiversity crisis. It identifies a range of interventions of various scales from simple individual behaviour changes to significant borough-wide investment requirements.

BACKGROUND

7. Full Council declared a climate change and biodiversity emergency in 2019, and a Local Commission, led by Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP, drew upon the insight and expertise of various public and private sector organisations, government agencies and resident representatives to discuss a range of environmental priority areas. A series of recommendations were presented in their final report in December 2020.
8. Alongside the work of the Commission, numerous 'Doncaster Talks' engagement exercises were held to directly gather the opinions and views of residents, as well as multiple series of elected member workshops and officer working groups representing public and private sector partners.
9. The strategy is an amalgamation of the views of multiple stakeholders and includes both new activity and a continuation or expansion of existing commitments and initiatives already included in individual partner strategies and action plans.
10. The strategy considers the drivers and impacts of issues and interventions from both a global and local perspective. It aims to provide a clear and transparent understanding of the challenges we face, as well as the numerous opportunities that environment-focused interventions will bring across other strategic priorities (e.g. economy, health and wellbeing).
11. The strategy is consistent with and complimentary to individual partner environment/sustainability strategies, as well as other partnership strategies that are either in place or currently in development e.g. Borough Strategy, Housing Strategy.
12. The Strategy (Appendix A) is presented as part of a package of documents which includes an Evidence Base (Appendix B) as well as the Climate and Biodiversity Commission report and individual partner environment strategies and plans.
13. There are a couple of key matters in particular that are included in the strategy document that decision-makers might want to be aware of:

Funding

14. This is a key issue across numerous strategy priority areas and interventions. Significant deprivation remains across several areas within Doncaster, and recent flooding and the Covid-19 pandemic have severely affected the financial stability of many businesses. As such, not everyone will have the money to make the necessary investments required to achieve strategy objectives.

15. The strategy is clear that there are some things that we can do now with no investment required – it's simply about changing our behaviours. There are also some things that some organisations will be able to do now with minimal investment. However, there are some things that businesses and households will be unable to do without funding support, especially given the levels of household deprivation and large proportion of businesses struggling as a result of Covid-19.
16. The strategy has identified the need for Team Doncaster to put in place a means of supporting stakeholders to obtain funding from Government or private investment funding streams (e.g. from organisations needing to offset their unavoidable emissions). Doing so would mean that those that are unable to make the necessary investments themselves don't miss out on having the same impact as others, and achieving the associated health, wellbeing and financial benefits that accompany the interventions.
17. There is a strong message, from both a financial and environmental point of view, about the longer-term benefits of the proposed investments, as well as a significantly higher cost of not acting.
18. The strategy is also clear on the value of Team Doncaster partners identifying and co-procuring responses to various environment issues, so that economies of scale bring unit prices down. This could be public sector partners working together, public and private sector partnerships, and even using street or community-level procurement to make individual interventions more affordable.

Monitoring and Governance

19. Due to the strategy identifying what needs to be done over the longer term, there is need for a clear process of monitoring progress towards those goals and holding partners to account for delivering their required contribution to the collective effort.
20. The Team Doncaster partnership board will have ultimate responsibility for delivery of the strategy and will assign responsibility for implementation of the Strategy to an appropriate delivery group. This group will be established in early 2021 with representatives from all stakeholder groups. Stakeholders will be required to contribute to the delivery of the strategy, and will have ultimate responsibility for monitoring and governance. There is also a role for Scrutiny Panels to challenge Team Doncaster on progress at appropriate stages throughout the year/strategy period.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

21. Option 1: Approve the strategy. (Recommended)
22. Option 2: Do not approve the strategy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

23. International, regional and local leaders have all acknowledged the climate change and biodiversity emergency. This is a global issue, but also a local issue. Doncaster needs to set out how we intend to play our part in the national

effort to combat this emergency, as well as respond to the local environmental issues that Doncaster is currently faced with and will likely face in the future. The strategy is the first step in identifying and communicating the scale and breadth of the challenge we face and encouraging a partnership approach to our collective response.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

24.

Outcomes	Implications
<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>Environment-focused interventions represent significant economic recovery and growth opportunities. They can create jobs, support new enterprises, and encourage better partnership working amongst businesses.</p>
<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	<p>Various environment-friendly initiatives (e.g. improving energy efficiency of homes; access to a greener, cleaner environment; or increasing active travel) can provide financial benefits to residents and businesses (e.g. through reduced running costs), but also contribute to improving mental and physical health and reducing inequalities across the Borough.</p>
<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>Knowledge and awareness of environmental issues will help residents and businesses make the right choices for our natural environment, but also the best choices for their households or businesses. New skills developed for new green industries will contribute to the Education and Skills ambition to upskill our labour force and support workers to obtain higher wage employment.</p>
<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>All residents can benefit from numerous interventions included in the strategy that will provide direct and indirect health benefits. This could prevent or postpone the need for care as more people will live healthier and more active lifestyles. This will be more possible from the right environment and infrastructure improvements (e.g. better quality homes, reduced fuel poverty, active travel, more leisure options, improved physical and mental health.)</p>

	Engaging with nature and environment-friendly initiatives can also help with childhood development and provides opportunities for children to be exposed to different, enriching experiences.
<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>Interventions that benefit the environment also benefit businesses and organisations through improved energy efficiency/reduced running costs; contributing to their corporate social responsibility; and a healthier workforce. Taking action towards addressing climate change can also help businesses and residents feel like they are part of the solution in the Borough and can provide a sense of community and connectedness through doing things together to make a difference for Doncaster.</p> <p>Planning for and mitigating risks associated with environmental emergencies such as flooding can help the Council and partners in their response if/when these events occur again.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

25. Many of the interventions included in the strategy can be delivered to some level within current partnership resources, but likely cannot be delivered to the extent/scale required to achieve the objectives. Significant investment is required by households, businesses and other organisations who may not have access to the money to do so. Additional funding sources (e.g. Government, SCR, private investors) will need to be identified and exploited to deliver the scale of intervention required.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [SRF Date 23/11/20]

26. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence to do anything that individuals may generally do. S111 Local Government Act 1972 further provides that a local authority shall have power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions. The Government has issued a series of Environmental targets and this strategy should take account of any Central Government requirements and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to any changes in those targets and strategies.
27. Any monies spent in pursuant of this strategy should be spent in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules and any decisions taken pursuant to this strategy should be taken within the legal framework within which local government sits. Further specific legal advice will be required as to the implementation and operation of the strategy and how it sits alongside other Council policies and procedures.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [OB Date 23/11/2020]

28. The implementation of the strategy is subject to the availability of both capital and revenue budgets. Although it is anticipated that some of the interventions included in the strategy could be delivered using existing partnership resources, additional sources of funding such as income from government grants and private investors will need to be identified and maximised to deliver the scale of intervention required. Any budget pressures arising from the implementation of the strategy should be considered as part of the annual budget setting process.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [DK Date 20/11/2020]

29. There are no direct HR imps in relation to this report, but if in future staff are affected or additional specialist resources are required then further consultation will need to take place with HR.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [PW Date 20/11/2020]

30. There are no specific technology implications relating to the recommendations in this report. Any technology requirements to support the delivery of the Environment and Sustainability Strategy would need to be discussed with Digital & ICT and where applicable would need to be considered and prioritised by the Technology Governance Board (TGB).

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [CT Date 24/11/2020]

31. Public Health supports the approval of the Strategy, which will enable the transformation needed to improve lives and well-being sustainably through the provision of healthy environments for the residents of Doncaster. Public Health has worked closely with the authors, providing input to the evidence base that sits alongside this Strategy.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [AB Date 23/11/2020]

32. Data and information collated as part of developing this strategy has not focused on any one specific group, area or characteristic, but instead has collected data which applies to all of Doncaster Borough and its population. The information collected has covered different aspects of the environment, both in terms of the current situation and options for interventions to respond to the issues faced.
33. Evidence gathering and consultation/engagement has sought input and feedback from as diverse an audience as possible in order to understand the needs and experiences of all members of Doncaster's population, including those in protected groups. A range of specific consultation exercises have taken place including partner workshops, elected member seminars and public engagement through various Doncaster Talks engagement events.
34. The Strategy is a high-level document setting out our strategic intent. The impact of many projects that stem from this Environment and Sustainability Strategy will require more in-depth consideration to understand the needs of each protected group. As we develop and propose individual projects/ activities

to implement the Strategy, project/locality-specific Due Regard Statements will be considered to ensure that specific cohorts with protected characteristics are adequately considered, included, engaged in the activity/opportunities and supported to contribute to the activity required.

CONSULTATION

35. Consultation has been a huge part of the development process for this strategy. This strategy is a borough-wide, multi-partner strategy that requires the contribution of various stakeholders. It has been critical to gather their opinions and insight on what is happening or not happening now, and what needs to happen in the future. It has also acted as a communication tool to prepare residents, businesses and organisations for the activities and required contributions that will come during the implementation of the strategy. Due regard has been given to ensure various stakeholders have been included in the development of the strategy; a Due Regard Statement is included as Appendix C.

36. A summary of the engagement is provided below:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2019 - Doncaster Talks • Oct 2019 - Ward Member seminars • Nov 2019 - Doncaster Talks (Climate & Biodiversity Commission Evidence Gathering) • Jan 2020 - Parish Councils (PCJCC) • Jan 2020 - Overview & Scrutiny Panel • Jul 2020 - Ward Member seminars • Jul 2020 - Overview & Scrutiny Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct 2020 - Doncaster Talks (Environment) • Oct 2020 - Parish Councils (PCJCC) • Sep 2020 - Members of Parliament • Nov 2020 - Overview & Scrutiny Panel • Partner officer representatives (throughout 2019 and 2020) • Elected leadership (throughout 2020)
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37. This research has given us a clear picture that tackling climate change is a priority for many people, and that many are already acting in response to it. The key factor in achieving our strategic aims will be to help more people to take similar action, and to encourage people, businesses or organisation to do more wherever they can – and where they cannot, we need to find ways to support them to do so.

38. As part of the latter stages of the strategy development, The Community and Environment Scrutiny panel and Team Doncaster Partnership Board have both reviewed the Strategy and given it their endorsement.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

39. None.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

40. N/A.

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